

22

ADDRESS

TO THE

CHURCHES;

IN RELATION TO SLAVERY.

Delivered at the First Anniversary of the Ohio State Anti-Slavery Society.

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WITH A FEW

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS,

BY A GENTLEMAN OF THE BAR.

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INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

Almost every crime against the Christian Religion, has been attempted to be justified, by *perversions* of the Bible. Thus religious persecution, legitimacy, or the divine rights of kings, aristocracy, human oppressions, murder, theft, polygamy, and other abominations, have been attempted to be vindicated by these criminal means. Perversions of the true meaning of the Scriptures are most heinous sins; (vide Ps. cxix. 126. Jer. xxiii. 36.—Eze. v. 6. 7. 8. Mic. iii. 9. Zeph. iii. 4. Mal. ii. 7. 9. Math. xv. 3. G. 9. Mark vii. 7. 8. 2 Acts xiii. 10. Gal. i. 7. Col. ii. 8. 2 Pet. ii. 1.—ii. 16. and numerous other passages) but nothing has been more common than such blasphemous refuges of lies, where the supposed interests of wicked men required support. Thus tyrants and persecutors of all sorts, have appealed to the Bible in justification of their conduct. The horrors of the Inquisition and of all other religious persecutions, have been pretended to be founded on christian principles! It is unnecessary to inquire, whether these corruptionists were, like St Paul, honest in their sins. Perhaps many of them sinned in ignorance. Probably very few of them were guilty of as much wilful sin, as the present slaveholders are. They did not sin against half as light and knowledge.

In order to place the guilt of the practice of modern slaveholding in a strong light, I state this proposition, viz. that if there be one doctrine more plainly and clearly taught in the Bible than another, it is the doctrine of the *condemnation, reprobation and denunciation of every kind of human oppression*, especially slavish oppression.—It is a leading, prominent, principal doctrine of the Bible. The ten commandments are not plainer.—More than a thousand passages of Scripture can be readily quoted, in direct vindication of it.—Distinct traces of it are to be observed, in all parts of the sacred volume. Judgments were denounced and inflicted, armies and individuals destroyed, and nations conquered and subjected by their enemies, as punishments, principally for the commission of *this very sin* of human oppression. Vide Gen., vi, 11—17;—xviii, 21—21. Ex., iii, 9;—xii, 29;—xiv, 28. Job, xx, 19;—xxvii, 13, &c. Prov., i, 11;—x, 1—3. Isa., xiv, 2;—xvi, 4;—xix, 20. Ezek., vii, 21—27;—ix, 9;—xi, 9;—xviii, 19—13;—xxii, 29; 31. Amos, iv, 1;—viii, 4—8. Mic., vi, 12;—vii, 2; 3. Nah., iii, 1. Hab., ii, 8. Zeph., iii, 1—8, &c. Zech., vii, 9—14. Matt., xxiii, 14. Mark, xii, 19. Luke, xx, 47. Rev., xviii, 13; and a hundred other passages equally plain. It should be observed, that in most cases of the enumerations of sins for which judgments are threatened, *this sin* occupies a prominent notice. Especially do numerous passages of scripture attest the doctrine, that oppression of the *poor* is one of the greatest of sins. Vide Job, xx, 19;—xxiv,

3, 7, 9, 11. Ps., x, 2, 8, 9;—xii, 5. Prov., xiv, 21, 31;—xvii, 5;—xxi, 13;—xxii, 16, 22, 23;—xxviii, 15—17;—xxx, 14. Eccl., v, 8. Isa., iii, 14, 15;—xxxii, 7. Jer., ii, 34;—xxii, 3. Amos, v, 11, 12. Hab., iii, 11. James, ii, 6, and a great number of other passages. Where a doctrine is so *very* plainly taught, perversions of the Scriptures, to justify practices that the Bible so plainly condemns, must be very reckless and presumptuous.

Slavery as it exists in the United States, is the highest degree and worst form of human oppression. Let people beware then, how they wrest the Scriptures to their own destruction. Let them beware, how they follow blind leaders of the blind! All must admit, that the whole *spirit, grain and tendency* of the Bible, as Mr. Rankin has clearly shown, are utterly hostile to the practice of slavery. Common sense will therefore teach us, that the construing of some half a dozen texts from the Levitical law, without comparing them with the rest of the Scriptures, and so as to make them support *slavery*, must necessarily be a most glaring and blasphemous perversion of their true meaning. Is it credible, that the Almighty should establish a practice among his chosen people by *law*, on account of which same practice, he had just before inflicted the most dreadful plagues on another nation, destroyed all their first born, and drowned their king and army, by way of punishment! Is it possible, that Abraham and the other patriarchs, practised the barbarities and abominations of modern slavery? Did they differ in character or *practice*, from the holy prophets and apostles? Is it credible, that the Almighty, who is no respecter of persons, should ratify a practice in one nation, that he punishes in another! Surely these monstrous inconsistencies and absurdities cannot be credible among *christians*; and all candid persons will readily believe, that those who, for the sake of supporting slavery and its horrors, have insisted on the reality of such ridiculous contradictions, have basely perverted the true meaning of those parts of the Scriptures which treat of the Hebrew servitudes.

The difference between the condition of servants and slaves is, that the natural rights of the former are protected by *law*, whereas *slaves* have no such rights to be protected. The rights of all *white* women, children and servants in the United States, are thus protected. So were those of all the Hebrew servants, as the context abundantly proves. And it may as well be pretended, that our poor laws and apprenticeship acts, sanction slavery or *voluntary* servitude, as that the Levitical law establishing the Hebrew servitudes did.—We have no more just reason to believe, that the sermon on the mount or the twelfth chapter of Romans, were intended to support slavery, than that the Levitical law was. That law was made for the support of the poor and the benefit of the ser.

there, and not for their oppression, as our slave system is.

The more ancient any book is, the more does it need *critical* study to understand it correctly.— This is owing to the long disuse of the most ancient languages, manners, customs and institutions, and of the original meaning of ancient idiomatic phrases and peculiarities. All critics are agreed in the allowance of this rule. The Pentateuch being the oldest book in the world, needs much critical study, to be correctly understood.— Thus the practice of *laying* men, really means in that book, nothing more than buying their *servi- tutes*, as the context clearly proves.— Vide Gen. xviii, 13-25. Also the word "*for- ce*," used in the description of the Hebrew servi- tudes, (vide Ex. xxi, 6, &c.) is translated from a Hebrew phrase, the *literal* meaning of which is, "*throughout the term*;" that is, the *term* which is the subject matter treated of in the passage where it occurs. The candid inquirer after christian truth, ought to be acquainted with these matters; for as Mr. Crellers well remarks, Roman Catho- lic corruption has crept even into the translation of the Scriptures.

In construing laws of any kind, the most uni- versal rule is, their *spirit* and *reason*; (vide 1 Blackstone's Com., 61) that is, the *object* or *cause* of the making of the law proposed to be con- strued. The use of this great rule, will help us much to the correct understanding of the true na- ture of the Hebrew servitudes. They were ex- pressly provided for the *comfortable support of the poor*. They were also intended to be *types* of the Messiah and his dispensation. Besides, we should argue from the spirit of the *system* of which the rule criticised forms a part. Judging by the light of this correct rule, as Mr. Rankin has done, it will be impossible to convince any honest person, that in a book which enjoins the practice of righteousness and justice in almost every page, the Almighty intended to establish the most unrighteous and unjust practice in ex- istence.

Some corruptionists attribute no higher a deri- vation to rights, than a *human* source; contend- ing, in order to justify the abominations of sla- very, that men have no rights, except what they derive from each other. This is also the common mistake of many honest persons, who suppose our rights are derived from the *governments* un- der which we live. But there is not much dan- ger that this blasphemous heresy, the only ten- dency of which is, to destroy the inalienable na- ture of all rights, & overthrow all republican free- dom & institutions, will gain extensive allowance.

Society is much too enlightened for its general encouragement. All our rights, like our existence and faculties, are the gift of our Maker; the clear proof of which is, that He has given us capacities to understand the nature and use of rights, has made their proper use necessary to our welfare, and has declared them in the fullest terms, and commanded us to use them in His word. Both the Word and the Works of God proclaim the ex- istence and inalienable nature of Human Rights; and for men to deprive each other of them, for any cause except crime, is a most blasphemous vio- lation of God's law. Governments and laws are made not to *give* but to protect rights; and when they produce a contrary effect, they are radically corrupt, and need radical reformation.

The object of the following "Address" is to prove, that slavery is as great a crime against the Law of God, as murder is; and that it is the duty of all christian churches, to *treat* the practice as they do murder and all other atrocious crimes. Christian slavery and the perversions on the cred- it of which it has been sustained, originated in the Roman Catholic church; and the world will never quit the practice of this abomination, until all the churches have purged themselves of it.— The moral sense of the American people directed to the perception and respect of Human Rights, though much obscured by slavery, is by no means yet extinguished. The Morgan affair, Miss Cor- nell's case, and many others, demonstrate this fact. And the danger to which our national freedom is exposed, and the deep disgrace which attaches to the national character, in consequence of the na- tional blindness to the moral nature of slavery, is owing more to the conduct of the American churches, than to any other cause. The christian religion is the only true light of republican freedom and equality of Human Rights, and the conduct of the churches in concealing this light and refusing to make it shine, is the principal guilty reason, why the abomination of slavery has so long polluted and disgraced our country.

However much the profane world may scoff at the christian religion and deride the christian church, it will to a great extent, outwardly fol- low its precepts and example. Christianity is itself so pure and yet so terrible, that the wick- edest men will respect it: and if the *whole* gospel be faithfully preached and practiced by its pro- fessors, it will banish all wicked laws, practices and customs from the world. Let the church be pure and it will purify the world, and produce per- fect freedom both spiritual and temporal. But until it is purified of the gross pollutions that now disgrace it, it will do neither.

AN ADDRESS TO THE CHURCHES IN RELATION TO SLAVERY.

The duty of the church on the subject of slavery, must be determined by the sacred Scriptures. These are the only infallible rule of faith and practice. The question then arises, Do the Scriptures condemn slavery, as it exists in our country, as a sin? In order to determine this question with the utmost certainty, it is necessary to inquire, whether our slavery is the same kind of servitude authorized by the nation of Israel? That there was a kind of servitude allowed in Israel, must be admitted. That there were both Hebrew and Gentile servants who were distinguished from hired servants, cannot be denied:—they were bought with money. The point now to be determined is, was that service voluntary or involuntary? Did these persons sell themselves, and receive an equivalent for their services? or were they stolen and sold by others, and compelled to serve without wages? With regard to the Hebrew servants, the matter is clear. They sold themselves: *Lev. xxv. 47.* 'And if a sojourner or a stranger were rich by thee, and thy brother that dwelleth by him was poor, and sold himself unto the stranger, he may be redeemed.' This passage shows that poor Hebrews sold themselves for servants, and received an equivalent for their services. The servitude of Hebrew servants, then, was voluntary, and for an equivalent. But did the Gentile servants sell themselves, or did others steal them and sell them? Were they compelled to serve without wages, or did they receive an equivalent for their services? The Israelites were permitted to buy heathen that were round about them and strangers that lived among them: *Lev. xxv. 44, 45.* 'Both thy bond-men and thy bond-maids shall be of the heathen that are round about you; of them shall ye buy bond-men and bond-maids.—Moreover, of the children of the strangers that do sojourn among you, of them shall ye buy, and of their families that are with you, which they begat in your land; and they shall be your possession.' The heathen and the stranger might alike be bought. Both were free, and who, but themselves, could have a right to sell them? The Hebrews were not allowed to steal them; and to buy them from such as had stolen them, would be no better. But none could, without incurring the penalty of death, steal those who dwelt in the land of Israel. Hence it is evident, that the Hebrews could purchase none but such as sold themselves; and, of course, could hold them to service no longer than the term specified in the purchase. If they might buy those that were stolen, why buy at all? Why not steal them themselves at once, and save their money? The fact that they bought those who lived in the land, when they had power to reduce them to servitude without purchase, shows that the common principles of justice were regarded; so that the servants bought, were bought from themselves, and paid for their services. Perhaps parents who were unable to maintain their children, might sell them for such a term as they had a right to their services. But there is no reason to believe that the Father of the universe ever allowed a parent to sell his own children into slavery for life. And if He did not allow the parent to commit such a crime against natural affection, surely He did not permit his people to encourage such wickedness. If the parent had no right to sell, the Hebrews had no right to purchase. The fact that the Hebrews had to buy their servants, shows that the principles of justice were strictly regarded, and that an equivalent was paid for the service. It may be objected,

that, it is said, that the children of the Hebrews should have these servants for an inheritance after their parents. To this it may be replied, that in case the parents died before the term of service was up, the children would have a right to the service due to their parents.

Again: It may be said that the servants were to be a possession forever, and that, of course, they must have been properly just as slaves are in modern times. To this it may be answered, that if the term forever be taken in a literal sense, it is evident that the same individuals could not be servants forever. And if the term be limited, it is as reasonable to suppose, that it was limited by the contract between master and servant as by any thing else. The passage seems to mean, that the Hebrews might by successive purchase, continually possess that kind of servants, and not, that they might hold the same individuals during life. No contract for service could be valid beyond the Jubilee. At that period all contracts were up, and all servitude was terminated. Liberty must be proclaimed throughout all the land—unto all the inhabitants thereof? *Lev. xxv. 10.*

The interpretation now given of the servitude of the Gentiles among the Israelites, is in accordance with the laws made for the protection of the stranger. 'Thou shalt neither vex a stranger nor oppress him.' *Exod. xxii. 21.* 'Thou shalt not pervert the judgment of the stranger.' *Deut. xxiv. 17.* 'Thou shalt not oppress a hired servant that is poor and needy, whether he be of thy brethren or of thy strangers that are within thy land within thy gates. At this day thou shalt give him his hire, neither shall the sun go down upon it, for he is poor, and setteth his heart upon it: lest he cry against thee unto the Lord, and it be a sin unto thee.' *Deut. xxiv. 14, 15.* Nothing could be a more direct violation of these statutes, than the practice of such slavery as exists in our slave-holding states. Nothing could more vex and oppress the stranger, than to hold him in such bondage.—To defraud the stranger of a single day's labor, is set down as a grievous sin: how much more grievous is the sin of taking from him both his liberty and his labor for life!

The servitude in Israel was voluntary, and the servants were paid for their services. They could be held no longer than the term for which they contracted. They had a right to hold property. They differed from hired servants chiefly in the length of the term for which they contracted, and in being adopted into the family of their masters, so as to entitle them to the religious privileges of children. They were circumcised as adopted sons, and had an equal right with the Hebrews to the passover. The standing of the servant in society, was the same with that of his master's family.—'Samuel made Saul and his servant sit in the chiefest place among them that were hidden, which were about thirty persons.' *1 Sam. ix. 22.* A hired servant was at liberty to leave his master sooner than the servant bought with money; but in other respects he had fewer privileges. If a master abused his servant so far as to knock out but a single tooth, the servant so injured was free from further service. The servitude in Israel was similar to apprenticeship in our country. An apprentice is bound to service for a number of years; he becomes, for the time, a member of his master's family; he should be treated as his master's children; he is a bond-man but not a slave; his standing in society is just as good as if he were free; he receives an equivalent for his services, and his master may correct, but not abuse him. All allow that this kind of servitude is just, and that

such servants ought to 'count their own masters worthy of all honor.' The bond-men among the Hebrews were not slaves, any more than apprentices in modern times. That interpretation which makes the Scriptures justify slavery, involves a palpable contradiction, and is wholly inconsistent with divine inspiration. This is evident from a variety of considerations.

1. The Scriptures represent all men as having sprung from one common parent—all as 'sons of one blood.' Consequently, all are created equally free. What were rights the first man had, all his children must have. God created no slaves. He gave to all men the same original rights.—One man has just as much right to freedom as another.

2. The Scriptures represent man as being created for the service of God. Happiness, in connection with the glory of his Creator, is represented as being the great end of his existence. With this, slavery is wholly inconsistent.

3. The Scriptures enjoin such duties upon all men as are entirely opposed to slavery. Children are commanded to obey their parents; and parents are commanded to bring up their children 'in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.' All are commanded to keep the Sabbath, and to attend the public ordinances of religion. With all these slavery interferes; and indeed, the same is true with respect to every other injunction to the open practice of christian duty. A cruel and wicked master may prevent the slave from discharging any of the common duties of christianity.

4. The Scriptures represent marriage as the common privilege of mankind. 'Marriage is honorable to all;' for this cause shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh; and 'what God hath joined together let no man put asunder.' But slavery annihilates the right of marriage.—The master may either prevent the slave from marrying, or separate him from his wife when married. A man may leave his father and his mother, who have a better right to him than any other being can have, and cleave unto his wife; but he may not leave his master for such purpose!—How glaring is the absurdity of slavery! The institution of marriage shows that parents have no right to hold their own children beyond mature age, and of course, could have no right to sell them to others beyond that period. Hence it is impossible that slavery should exist without the flagrant violation of justice.

5. The Scriptures represent man as having a right to acquire and hold property in land and in beasts, and as being crowned with glory and honor, and set over the works of God's hands, being made but a little lower than the angels. Such a representation regards the entire family of man, and is strikingly opposed to slavery. All men are set over the works of God's hands, and have an equal right to acquire and hold property; and consequently, man cannot have the right to hold property in his fellow-man.

6. The law of love enjoined by the Scriptures forbids slavery. 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.' 'I say unto you, love your enemies.' 'Do good unto all men.' 'All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets.' No man would wish another either to make him a slave, or to hold him in slavery, because he had bought him from one who had no right to sell him; and consequently, no man can hold a slave and at the same time fulfil the law of love. The law of love not only prohibits every species of injury to our fellow-men, but it enjoins the positive doing

of good to every human being so far as we have opportunity. That slavery is a positive injury, cannot be intelligently and honestly denied; and therefore it must be opposed to the law of love.

7. The Scriptures expressly call slavery oppression. 'And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigor. And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar and in brick and in all manner of service in the field. And I have also seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them?' Exod. i. 13, 14, 39. The Egyptians reduced the Israelites to slavery in two respects. They compelled the males to involuntary service, and gave them no compensation. In these two particulars it was the same kind of slavery that exists in the United States.

The colored people are compelled to involuntary service, and they are not compensated for their services. In other respects the condition of the Hebrews was much better than that of the colored people. The males only were enslaved, and they were not bought and sold, and separated from their families. The cruelty in putting the male children to death, did not equal the cruelty of the domestic slave-trade. Upon the whole, the slavery of Egypt was less oppressive than ours. Our slavery, then, is oppression even worse than that endured by Israel in Egypt. It is oppression in the judgment of God, and in the judgment of all honest men; and hence it is forbidden in the Scriptures a thousand times over.

That the Scriptures call slavery oppression, is also evident from Isaiah lviii. 6: 'Is not this the fast I have chosen? To loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?' The Hebrews began to practice slavery like the heathen around them, but God commanded them to let the oppressed slave go free, and thus to break every yoke. Hence the Scriptures forbid slavery as it exists among us, as often as they forbid oppression; and the Scriptures teach us that the laborer is worthy of his reward. But in slavery the laborer is not paid for his labor; hence the Scriptures forbid slavery as often as they forbid defrauding the laborer. If to defraud the laborer out of a single day's labor is a sin, surely to compel a man to labor during life, and give no wages, must be a thousand fold greater. The fact that the man has been bought from one that had no right to sell him, only aggravates the sin. The severest judgments are denounced against those who defraud the laborer. 'Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for the miseries that shall come upon you. Behold, the hire of the laborers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you, kept back by fraud, crieth; and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.' James v. 1, 4. This denunciation must lie against slave-holders: the hire is by fraud kept back from slaves.

9. The Scriptures forbid slavery under the heaviest penalty. 'He that stealeth a man, and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, shall surely be put to death.' Exod. xxi. 16. The design of stealing a man is to make him a slave.—Hence in the judgment of God, to make a man a slave is a crime worthy of death: the very penalty annexed to murder, and stated in still stronger terms—he shall surely be put to death.

God not only prohibited slavery in Israel under the penalty of death, but he commanded his people to protect every slave that should escape to them from the surrounding nations.—'Thou shalt not deliver unto the master his servant which is escaped from his master unto thee: he shall dwell with

thee; thou shalt not oppress him.' Deut. xxiii. 15, 16. 'The heathen nations around Israel were guilty of the sin of slavery; and God's people were prohibited from being partakers of that sin by giving up fugitive slaves. At the peril of war they must protect the slave that escaped to them. To aid the heathen in holding them they had stolen, would be the same in effect as to steal them.— Nothing can be more plainly and decidedly forbidden than slavery is in the Old Testament Scriptures. The New Testament recognizes the same prohibition as still in force. Paul says the law was made 'for men-stealers.' 1 Tim. i. 10. 'The original word rendered men-stealers, includes all who in any way enslave their fellow men—whether by man-stealing, slave-dealing or slave-holding. It may be as properly rendered slave-holders, as man-stealers. The crime of man-stealing consists in depriving men of their liberty. This the slaveholder does as certainly and as unjustly as the man-stealer. The slave has in himself, by the gift of God, the inherent right of liberty; his right is equal to that of every other man. The fact that he has been brought up in slavery, or that he has been stolen and sold into slavery, cannot in the least affect his title to liberty. Nor can the fact that the state ordains that he shall be a slave, give the least right to hold him. And government is ordained to protect the rights of men, and not to give rights, nor to take them away, except so far as God has permitted for the punishment of crimes against the rights of others. God never gave to civil government the right of making slaves of innocent men. The state then has no more right to compel a man to hold a slave, than it has to compel a man to commit murder. There is then, no possible source from which the slaveholder can obtain the right to hold a slave; and consequently he is guilty of taking away the inherent rights of his fellow-man, and is guilty of the very sin forbidden in the law against man-stealing.

It is often said that we ought to leave slavery just where Christ and his apostles left it. And where was that? Just where the Old Testament Scriptures left it—under the sentence of death! 'He that stealeth a man, or selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, that is, whether he steals, sells, or holds him, shall surely be put to death.' The law was made 'for men-stealers.' 'Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and right.' If hired, give them wages; if bond-servants, such as apprentices, or those that have bound themselves to service for a term of years, treat them kindly and give them an equivalent for their services; if slaves, set them at liberty, and remunerate them for the injury done them.— Nothing less would be just and equal. Paul makes it the duty of a servant to be free if he can obtain his liberty: 'If thou mayest be free, use it rather.' If this is applicable to any kind of a servant, it must be to a slave. If it be the duty of the slave to obtain his freedom if he can, it cannot be the duty of the master to hold it from him.— Did not Christ and his apostles condemn oppression? Did they not teach that the laborer is worthy of his reward? Did they not condemn defrauding the laborer? Did they not recognize the law against man-stealing? Did they not condemn slavery in all its parts, and as a whole? All the constituent parts of slavery are forbidden by Christ and his apostles in the clearest terms; and it is as a whole forbidden as man-stealing.

It is then clear from the Scriptures, that slavery is a sin, and one of the greatest magnitude. It is positively and plainly forbidden under the severest penalty.

We are now prepared to point out the duty of

the church in relation to slavery. It is the duty of the church in all her various branches, to bear testimony against it in proportion to the magnitude of its criminality. This should be done.

1. By the public preaching of the gospel. Every minister of the gospel is as much bound to preach against the sin of slavery, as against the sin of murder. God has said, 'He that sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: but in the case of slavery he has added, *'surely he shall;'* 'he that stealeth a man shall surely be put to death.' In view of the evil and cruelty of slavery, it is no wonder that God should set such a penalty against it. How vast the amount of murder that has resulted from slavery in the United States! All that have perished by the slave trade, by change of climate, by oppressive labor, by starvation, by cruel scourging and direct violence, must amount to millions! All this blood lies upon this nation! All this could have been prevented by adopting the divine law against man stealing, into the civil code at the proper time. What a mercy it would have been to this ruined nation! Slavery in every age has been a system of murder, and must ever continue to be such. This is, no doubt the reason why God forbid it under the penalty of death.

Again: nothing can be productive of more misery in this life than slavery. It breaks up all the tender relations of life. Eternity alone can reveal the amount of sorrows resulting from the sale of slaves; and vast is the amount that results to them from other sources.

The worst feature of slavery is, that it destroys the souls of men. It takes away from the slaves the key of knowledge, and the power of providing for themselves and their children the means of grace.—There are now two millions of slaves in the Union, that are deprived of the privilege of learning to read the word of God. Vast numbers of them are in the hands of infidel masters, who will not permit them to hear the gospel. The right of marriage is abolished, and thus the prominent means to parity is taken from them. They cannot train up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. A thousand obstructions are thrown in the way of life. Every fountain of vice is opened upon them; and thus the continued tendency of slavery is to deeper and still deeper ignorance and degradation; and the ever swelling tide of moral death bears the hapless immortals down to endless sorrows.

The tendency of slavery upon the free population is deplorable. It is the channel to every vicious indulgence. Idleness, intemperance, gambling and debauchery, are its genuine fruits; and it is itself a soul-destroying sin. How vast the multitude of masters and slaves that go down together to the pit of endless destruction! No system of wickedness can be better calculated to destroy the souls of men. Should not the gospel ministry, whose business is to save souls, unite all their energies against it? Should they not lift up their voice like a trumpet, cry aloud, and spare not? If they fail to warn, will not God require the blood of the souls that perish at their hands?

And who can estimate the worth of souls?—The brightest seraph that stands nearest the throne of God could not, in millions of ages, estimate the worth of a single soul. The time will come in eternity, when the soul of the meanest slave saved, shall have enjoyed more happiness than has yet been enjoyed by all the created beings in the vast universe; and then that soul will be nearer an end of happiness than when it first entered heaven! None but God could redeem a soul; and heaven's treasures were ex-

haunted in the purchase. And shall millions of souls be deprived of the word of life? Shall the image of God and the price of a Saviour's love; be bought and sold like beasts? Shall God be robbed of the services of immortal beings? Shall they who are made a little lower than the angels, be chained down to endless night? And shall gospel ministers, sent to warn the world of sin, stand silent and let the tide of death roll on?— Shall they fold their hands to rest while the waves of eternal death are tossing heaven high, and burying millions in endless ruin? Wee to that minister who stains his garments in the blood of souls, and like Cain, with hands reeking in a brother's blood, says, 'Am I my brother's keeper?' It is in vain to say that slavery is a political evil—that ministers should not interfere with politics. Will such an excuse avail at the bar of God when the judgment shall sit? The gospel ministry are sent to be the light of the world. The Saviour declares they are the light of the world.' Who but the ministers of Christ are to enlighten civil government? The sacred Scriptures are the standard of morals for government, as well as for individuals. And never will government reform while gospel ministers keep back the truth. The church must always be first in reform and the ministry should always lead in the way to reformation. Let it not be said that it will do no good to preach against slavery. It is the business of the disciple to bear his testimony, and leave the event with his master. He is sent to reprove every sin, and to declare the whole counsel of God; and then, if men refuse to hear, and perish in their sins, the ambassador of Christ is free from their blood; but if he fail to do his duty, their blood shall be required at his hand. No minister can determine how much good may result from repressing popular sins;—nor is it his business to determine such matters.

2. It is the duty of the church to exclude all slaveholders from her communion. Slavery has been shown to be a sin of the greatest magnitude. The tenure by which every slave is held is in itself unjust, independent of the motives by which he is held. Good motives may be a mitigation of crime; but they can never make a thing right that is wrong in itself. The civil law makes the slave property; it gives the master power to retain him only because he is his property, and the moment he ceases to be his property he is free. This tenure is in itself unjust, and cannot be made right by good motives. The tenure by which an apprentice is held, the Scriptures clearly justify. It results from fair contract between parties having the right to make the proper stipulations. Similar to this was the Jewish servitude. The apprentice is a bond-servant, but not a slave. He is not property; he is not liable to be sold for his master's debts.

The same is true of the tenure by which parents hold their children in a state of minor age: it is clearly justified by the word of God, and is founded upon principles of justice. The tenure by which the slave is held is the very reverse of that by which children and apprentices are held: it has no foundation in justice, and is expressly forbidden in the word of God under the penalty of death. Then while we make all proper allowances for good intentions, the simple fact of holding a man in bondage by an unjust tenure ought to exclude a man from the communion of the church.

It may be objected, that some of the states prohibit the emancipation of slaves. To this it may be replied, that slaveholders made the laws prohibiting the emancipation of slaves, and consequently have no right to plead them as an excuse for injustice. Besides, there is not a man in the

Union but can liberate his slaves by making the proper sacrifices. No man can be compelled to hold a slave. The civil government may sacrifice his property, but it cannot compel him to hold a slave. Christianity has clearly established the principle, that a man must sacrifice all he has, and even his life, sooner than do wrong.— 'If a man forsake not all that he hath he cannot be my disciple,' is the positive declaration of the Son of God. It will require of no slave-holder to liberate his slaves, more than was required of the young man in the gospel. 'Go sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor.'

The man then, that will hold his fellow-man in bondage by an unjust tenure sooner than sacrifice all his property, ought to be excluded from the communion of the church. Surely such a man would deny Christ in the hour of persecution.

Again: it may be objected, that to liberate slaves in many cases would make their condition worse, especially as in some states there are laws to take them up and sell them again into slavery. To this it may be replied, that a man is not held responsible for that which he has no power to prevent, farther than he contributed to its existence. He is not accountable for the bad use which others make of his discharge of duty.— Suppose the state should pass a law to put a man's children to death, in case he should become a Christian; ought he to reject Christ, and live in sin, to save the lives of his children? Or would he be chargeable with murder in case his children should be put to death under such a law? Every candid man will say, the crime in such case must fall upon the state and the individuals who executed the law.

If liberated slaves make a bad use of their liberty, they, as rational beings are accountable, and ought to be punished like other men. And if others take them up and sell them into slavery, they shall bear their sin. All that can be done by advice and influence ought to be done, to prevent their condition from being made worse, if worse it could be made; but to hold them by an unjust tenure, to prevent their condition from being made worse, is to do evil that good may come. And the Scriptures declare that the damnation of such as do so, is just. The Scriptures nowhere justify holding a man in slavery for his good. This has in every age, been the pretext for tyranny. They that exercised authority upon the Gentiles were called benefactors—they exercised their tyranny for the good of the people; but the Saviour said it should not be so among his disciples. There must be no such benefactors among them. No pretext, then, should be admitted, not even that of holding slaves for their good. If one pretext is admitted, another may; and the exercise of discipline be impracticable.— The sin of holding a man in bondage by an unjust tenure, is of itself amply sufficient to exclude a man from the communion of the church. And the taking of the labors of a man without his consent, and without wages, is a sin of no ordinary magnitude. Where is the church that would not cut off from church fellowship the man that had defrauded his hired laborer out of a single day's labor, and refused to repent and make restitution. How much more then the man that compels his fellow-being to work for days and months and years, and even during life, without wages!

In order to the exercise of discipline it is not necessary to decide whether a slave-holder can be a Christian or not. The object of discipline is to bring offenders to repentance, and not merely that of excluding from the church those who have no piety.

Some denominations have nobly begun this work of mercy, and have already breasted the storm. Let the church universal, as the army of the living God, come up to the help of the Lord,

to the help of the Lord against the mighty; let her voice be heard as the voice of many waters, proclaiming liberty to the captive, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound,—and the poisonous fountains of death shall be dried up, the rivers of anguish shall cease to flow, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. Union in this great work will prepare the church for the rising of millennial glory, when liberty shall be universal, and the song of redeeming love shall ascend from every tongue, 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward

Beloved Brethren,

Mr. Rankin has already proved beyond the shadow of a doubt, that slavery is a sin. Every christian who takes the Bible in its true meaning, believes this. The result of this conviction is, or ought to be, a lively sense of the duty incumbent upon you to exert all your influence to do away this great evil—this vast source of human suffering and degradation; and to raise your oppressed fellow-men to that standard in the scale of being to which they are entitled. And is it not the obvious duty of the Church, and of course of every individual member, —is it not your duty, to testify against this ~~sin, plainly and pointedly~~ although at the same time with all the kindness tenderness of christian feeling? What says the word of God upon the duty of proving others? "Thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy brother, and not suffer sin upon him." "Cry aloud, spare not—show my people their iniquities, &c." &c. And if you neglect this duty, sin on your part, will be imputed to you which you will be unable to clear up. "The unwholesome members of the church are the great danger to the church." "The nations of men."—We do not plead for any unnatural alliance. We plead for the *inalicable rights* of our fellow men. Remember that the

poor slave who is toiling in hopeless bondage beneath the lash of the merciless overseer, is the purchase of a Saviour's blood, destined to the same immortality with you. You see him, with imploring look, stretch his trembling hand and exclaim,

"Am I not a man and a brother?" You see him, travelling down the vale of his thorny pilgrimage, destitute of hope, present or future, and can you, in all the richness of these blessings which a merciful Providence has showered upon you, pass him unheeded by? Let me repeat the inquiry, can you contrast your own situation with that of the poor heart broken slave, and then, like the unfeeling Priest or Levite, "pass by on the other side." I trust not. "Trust that the anxious inquiry will be, *What is my duty?* And when the question of duty is fully settled, that you will pursue an undeviating, straight forward course in the path of duty, regardless of the finger of scorn from the unfeeling, or the hiss of the ignorant and the vulgar.—Remember that your obligations to your Creator and Redeemer are infinite. Your responsibilities are fearful and tremendous. Then, as you hope to receive the kind and endearing invitation of your Saviour, "Come ye blessed,"—and avert the fearful sentence, "Depart ye Cursed"—imitate His expansive benevolence, by acts of mercy to your fellow men of every colour and condition.